

No trace found in 31 homes

By BRENT SHRUM

Western News Reporter

Tests conducted at 31 homes cleaned of asbestos-contaminated vermiculite had shown no trace of lingering contamination, local Environmental Protection Agency project manager Peggy Churchill reported at last Thursday's Community Advisory Group meeting.

The tests included residences at which cleanup had been completed one month to one year before the samples were taken, Churchill said. Samples were collected from personal air monitors worn by people going about their normal daily activities, stationary air monitors and household dust, Churchill said.

Of the 31 properties where samples were collected, 17 involved vermiculite insulation removal with an interior cleaning, 10 involved vermiculite insulation removal only, three involved an interior cleaning only and one involved exterior removal only.

All the samples came back "non-detect," showing no sign of asbestos contamination, Churchill said.

"We're really excited about that," she said.

A full report on the post-cleanup sampling is available at the EPA information center at 501 Mineral Ave.

In other business, the CAG discussed declining membership at meetings and possible responses. Members noted the lack of participation by city and county officials as well as representatives of other groups such as real estate agents and people involved in economic development.

LeRoy Thom suggested that the CAG, which was formed by the EPA in 2000 and formerly met twice a month, consider either disbanding or scheduling meetings every other month or quarterly instead of the current once a month.

Gayla Benefield said she thinks

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Continued from Page 1

advance publicity is needed to promote meetings where special presentations are scheduled.

Several CAG members, including Benefield, Kirby Maki, Clinton Maynard and Les Skramstad, said they don't think it's time to stop holding meetings or reduce their frequency.

"We really need to keep this group going and having fewer meetings is not the way to do it in my view," Skramstad said.

Benefield agreed to draft a letter to city and county officials and possibly other former CAG members encouraging participation.